

ON THE SELECTION OF A GENOTYPE FOR A GENUS
IN WHICH NO NAMED SPECIES WAS AT ANY
TIME INCLUDED BY ITS AUTHOR

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Opinion 46 promulgated by the Zoological Commission in 1912 was intended to show how and when the above problem could be solved. Unfortunately this Opinion appears to be particularly liable to misinterpretation, and for this reason a critical analysis was made and published in the Entomologist's Monthly Magazine for May, 1942, p. 97-103. Some additional notes on the problem submitted to the Commissioners may be of some help in arriving at a clear conception of the probable reasons why they dealt with it in the way they did.

This problem demanded that two fundamental facts of Zoological Nomenclature should be borne in mind, viz.,

1. That a named species is the foundation of the structure of Zoological Nomenclature.
2. That the use of a generic name is governed by the selection of a species as genotype, *and this genotype must be one of the originally included named species.*

It follows that a generic name given to the definition or description of the presumed group (*i.e.*, generic) characters of species not mentioned by name is a *genus dubium* until at least one originally included species has been identified.

The Commissioners were therefore required to arrange for the selection of a named species, which could not on facts be excluded from being one of the original species not mentioned by name, and the establishment of its identity with this latter.

A generic description gives the characters by which its author maintains that a species, or group of species, differs from all others. One can disagree with the author on the limits of the genus and include species which do not possess all the characters quoted, but if you are asked to select a species as one originally

placed in that genus by its author but not named by him, *you must select one which answers accurately to ALL the facts given in the original publication about the included species*. If the species you select does so answer it has been "recognized" on facts, *though not identified*; it cannot, on facts, be denied that it *may be one* of the originally included species; if it does *not* so answer its supposed recognition is a matter of opinion and is open to challenge. There can be no doubt therefore that the Commissioners in making it an essential condition that "*No species is available as genotype unless it can be recognized from the original generic publication*" intended the recognition to be incapable of being challenged on facts.

The use, in the essential condition quoted above, of the phrase "generic publication" and not "generic diagnosis" proves that the Commissioners realized that an author might include facts additional to those given in the generic diagnosis, for instance, a note on the larval habits, a general statement that the species were all European, or that they were those in the author's collection only, facts with which it was equally necessary for a selected species to be in agreement before it could be considered that an originally included species had been "recognized" on facts.

It is evident that the Commissioners also realized that it might often be impossible to recognize in this manner one of the original un-named species, and ruled that under these circumstances the generic name should remain a *genus dubium*.

As it remained impossible to prove that a species "claimed to be recognized" as one originally included, was in fact one so included it was necessary for the Commissioners to rule, as they did, that such a claim should be accepted as correct, *but the addition of the words "until proved incorrect"* makes it certain that the claim was to be one incapable of being challenged *because the only possible proof of incorrectness is non-agreement with all the published facts*.

Unfortunately this "claim to recognize" if not read in conjunction with the rest of the Opinion may, quite incorrectly, be taken as *the* Opinion, and it may be argued that selection of a genotype in such cases is quite simple, one "claims to recognize" one of the un-named species and this claim must be accepted as correct.

Those who hold this view are obliged to admit that many points in the Opinion (including the Summary) thereby become contradictory, or (*e.g.*, the words "until proved incorrect") unnecessary. This is an indictment for incapacity against Stiles who drew up the whole of the Opinion, and against the Commissioners who approved it, an indictment wholly unjustified when an interpretation *is* possible by which the various statements in the Opinion and Summary become co-ordinated and comprehensible.

The above incorrect interpretation is useful however in clearly exposing the "crux" of the whole matter, *viz.*, did the Commissioners include a provision in the Opinion that a claim to recognize one of the un-named species cannot be accepted as correct if it can be proved that recognition is impossible? That they did include such a proviso is proved by the following facts:

1. The essential feature of the Opinion is given in the Summary as "No species is available as a genotype unless it can be recognized from the original generic publication." *There is no mention of the "claim to recognize."* It is inconceivable that the Commissioners would omit this from the Summary if it constituted the basis of the Opinion.
2. The inclusion of the word "however" in the last paragraph under Category 3. That is, after mentioning the power to claim to recognize an original species comes the proviso: "if, *however*, the species taken by an author as basis of a genus of the third category is not recognizable the genus in question becomes a *genus dubium*."
3. The use of the word "becomes" in the last paragraph under both Categories 3 and 4. For instance in Category 4, after mentioning the power to claim to recognize one of the original species, and select it as genotype, thereby *temporarily* validating the genus, comes the proviso: "if it is impossible to recognize any one of the original species, the genus *becomes* a *genus dubium*." This use of the word "becomes" proves that the proviso under both Category 3 and 4 must apply to a temporarily validated genus otherwise "remains" would be used instead of "becomes."

When it is remembered that a genotype must be a species origi-

nally included in a genus, it must be conceded that in dealing with generic names such as those under discussion, no other course could be adopted than to impose the restriction on the selection of a genotype quoted in the Summary of Opinion 46.

Finally, no excuse is needed for bringing this particular Opinion to the notice of American Dipterists because unfortunately it is one of great importance to students of Dipterological Nomenclature, greater indeed than its intrinsic merits actually deserve.